

I think things are going well in Iraq. Certainly, I have no qualms with the way the State Department and the Defense Department are working together. I do not think we ought to upset the apple cart when things are moving in the right direction.

I want to take a few moments to talk about the President's supplemental request in total. I ask my colleagues for quick action on the underlying bill. The reasons for quick action are simple. If we want to see a reduction in the number of soldiers in Iraq, we need to fully fund this request. If we want to improve the security in Iraq, we must approve this request. If we want a Democratic Iraq, governed by Iraqis, we must approve this request.

No one in this body on either side of the aisle would deny we need additional operational and procurement funds for our military. We all know that. Yet there is a great controversy over the reconstruction funds which in the long-term could be just as important to the safety of the troops as the additional operation and procurement funds.

Our troops will benefit from the additional operational funds that are requested in the \$87 billion. My view is that if we want to see our forces out of Iraq quickly, we need to have those operational funds because they are essential to moving ahead with Iraq becoming self-sufficient, with Iraq being able to defend itself and being able to assume the responsibilities the U.S. military right now is assuming.

My point is that not only are the Iraqis beneficiaries, but our soldiers over in Iraq are beneficiaries, and they are beneficiaries for the reason it is going to be an opportunity for them to move out quicker and get home quicker. That is what we all want to see. Our ability to protect the men and women of the U.S. military is at stake.

Since the beginning of hostilities last February, there have been 19 soldiers from Colorado's Fort Carson and five other Coloradans who have died in Iraq. These men and women have paid the ultimate sacrifice in pursuit of the freedoms we often take for granted. I would be dishonoring the sacrifice these brave Americans have made and failing to protect those who continue to serve in Iraq if I did not support both the military funding portion of the supplemental and the reconstruction funding.

While the \$20 billion in reconstruction funds will not end the guerilla attacks on our troops, it will make a difference. Iraq is a dangerous country, and as long as American troops are on the ground there, they will be at risk, as any American who may be in that country. However, the fact remains that the more we repair the old wounds of the Hussein regime, the safer our troops will be in Iraq. Specifically, the money we spend on upgrading the water of Iraq and sanitation services, the oil infrastructure rehabilitation, and the healthcare and education of

the Iraqi people will have a direct impact on the safety of our troops.

Improving the social conditions of the Iraqi people will reduce hostility and ease the sense of desperation many Iraqis have felt since the fall of Saddam Hussein. Moreover, this funding will give Iraqis hope and demonstrate our commitment to not only rid Iraq of terrorists, but also improve the lives of ordinary Iraqis.

Freedom cannot be bought on the cheap. And, as Paul Bremer testified last week, the Coalition Provisional Authority's seven-step program towards Iraqi self-governance hinges on the basic needs of the Iraqis being fulfilled. Without it, democracy will fail. This cannot be allowed to happen.

Think back about what has been mentioned before about reconstruction after World War II and how we all realized after World War I that we had troops who were waiting to go home, everybody was excited to go home, but nobody stayed around to help stabilize the countries we defeated during World War I. Consequently, events evolved and we were into World War II. I think we learned our lesson, and that is that there needs to be a reconstruction period. So we had the Marshall plan put into effect. I think we need to not forget that lesson today if we want to see Iraq be a permanent democracy in the Middle East.

Perhaps of most importance to our troops in Iraq is the efforts to reconstitute the Iraqi Army and expand the civil police force. The money in the supplemental would help establish 27 battalions for the Iraqi Army and a police force of about 80,000 in the next 12 to 18 months.

Let me stress how important these efforts are. To have Iraqi patrols policing their own people will allow a safer environment for our soldiers and show the Iraqi people that we are not occupiers, and that Iraq is their country and their responsibility. In fact, the commander of Central Command, General Abizaid, testified before the Senate Armed Services Committee that the most important part of the supplemental is these security funds. I quote General Abizaid:

... we can speed up the training of the Iraqi Army—instead of taking 2 years, take 1, and we can't do that without more money.

The general goes on to state:

... every month that goes by where we don't start those security projects is a month longer before those guys go out and potentially can relieve our troops of some of their duties.

If the combatant commander with responsibility for Iraq believes reconstruction efforts and the security of American soldiers is linked, we should certainly heed his advice.

I think the additional point has been made in many hours of testimony before the Armed Services Committee that our intelligence will improve dramatically the more we are able to incorporate the Iraqi police force and their assistance in maintaining domestic stability in Iraq.

The issue has been also broached about making the reconstruction funds a loan to the already impoverished nation. I object to this idea for two important reasons. First, there are those in the United States, and many more abroad, who protested the idea of going to war with Iraq. A large majority of these critics believed this was a war for oil. They believed our insatiable need for fuel was driving us toward an occupation of Iraq so we could control its oil fields. I am not going to outline why this assumption was flawed in the first place, because you only have to look at the U.N. mandates the Hussein regime ignored and the mass graves of his murdered people. This is an absurd notion but not one we can afford to ignore.

However, if we ask for a loan, where will Iraq come up with the money? Nineteen billion is what has been estimated in their oil fields when they get up in production, and when they have a \$20 billion loan, that doesn't even service the interest on that loan. How will it look for the United States when we ask the Iraqis to pump their crude to pay us back for the money we loaned them? Perception is important for us in the Middle East and we cannot afford to have an "oil motive" attached to our efforts to bring democracy to the region.

Another concern would be the example set for the other countries of the world that might contribute to the reconstruction effort. Iraq already owes \$200 billion to Russia and France and Germany and others. Are we to ask them to forgive their debt and then demand payment for our generosity?

Our negotiators need leverage when they ask for reconstruction funds from the rest of the world. Our leverage would be nullified if the proposed grant to Iraq changes to a loan. Again, perception of asking for help for a burgeoning democracy in the Middle East would be muddled if we have an IOU in our back pocket.

A few weeks ago the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, General Myers, testified before the Armed Services Committee and remarked that our battle in Afghanistan and Iraq is a battle of wills. He stated:

We are going to win as long as we have the continuing will of the American people, and for that matter, freedom loving people everywhere.

This supplemental request is a measure of our will, a measure of our commitment to the Iraqi people. Terrorist organizations such as al-Qaida and state sponsors of terrorism like the former Hussein regime have doubted America's commitment in the past. Are we prepared to risk additional attacks against our troops if we fail to assist in the reconstruction of Iraq? Are we prepared to say to the people of Iraq they are on their own? Are we prepared to stay the course?

We must act quickly, we must act decisively, and we must pass this funding as requested by the President. The